

Message Text

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ACTION EB-06

INFO OCT-01 NEA-06 SS-15 SSO-00 ISO-00 L-01 PM-03 SP-02

INR-05 EUR-08 RSC-01 INRE-00 /048 W

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FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9752

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 8434

STADIS////////////////////////////////////

DEPT FOR SAUNDERS

DEPT PLEASE PASS MOSCOW-FOR ATHERTON

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EGEN EG

SUBJ: JOINT ECONOMIC WORKING GROUP: FCN TREATY

1. I PERSONALLY BELIEVE THAT GOE WOULD CONSIDER NEGOTIATION OF AN FCN TREATY WITH USG PREMATURE FOR A NUMBER OF REASONS: (A) AS DEPT NOTES, IT WOULD PUT GOE OUT IN FRONT OF OTHER ARAB STATES, (B) INSUFFICIENT PROGRESS HAS AS YET BEEN MADE ON SETTLEMENT ARAB-ISRAELI PROBLEM AND ON US ECONOMIC AID TO EGYPT TO WARRANT TAKING POLITICAL RISK OF SIGNING SUCH AGREEMENT, (C) IT WOULD GIVE UNNECESSARY OFFENSE TO SOVIETS AT A TIME WHEN BREZHNEV HAS FINALLY AGREED TO VISIT CAIRO AND EGYPTIANS ARE SALIVATING AT PROSPECTS SOVIET AID MAY BEFORE LONG BE RESUMED, (D) ADVERSE REACTION OTHER NON-ALIGNED STATES. IN ANY CASE, SADAT HAS REPEATEDLY MADE THE POINT, PUBLICLY AND PRIVATELY, THAT HIS NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH THE USG HAS DEVELOPED WITHOUT ANY WRITTEN AGREEMENT.

2. WHILE I LIKE TO HAVE FCN CONCLUDED WITH EGYPT, I BELIEVE JOINT ECONOMIC WORKING GROUP IS THE
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WRONG PLACE TO FLOAT SUCH AN IDEA. THERE WILL BE TOO

MANY EGYPTIAN BUREAUCRATS AT THE MEETING WHO WILL KNOW ABOUT IT AND SPREAD THE WORD. THIS WILL BE UNHELPFUL TO SADAT.

3. IN MY JUDGMENT, GIVEN POLITICAL SENSITIVITY OF SUCH AN FCN TREATY PROPOSAL, SUBJECT SHOULD FIRST BE INFORMALLY AND CONFIDENTIALLY EXPLORED WITH FAHMY AND THE PRESIDENT TO GET THEIR REACTION. WHATEVER ECONOMIC BENEFITS FCN TREATY WOULD GIVE EGYPT, AND I THINK WE HAVE TO BE CANDID AND ADMIT THESE ARE LIKELY TO BE LIMITED, THE SYMBOLISM OF NEGOTIATING SUCH A TREATY NOW OR ANY TIME IS POLITICAL AND SHOULD BE HANDLED IN A POLITICAL CONTEXT. THE EGYPTIAN BEAURCRACY SHOULD BE BROUGHT INTO THE ACT ONLY RPT ONLY AFTER A HIGH LEVEL GOE POLITICAL DECISION HAS BEEN MADE TO GO AHEAD. I RECOGNIZE WE ARE TRYING TO FIND POSITIVE THINGS FOR UPCOMING JOINT ECONOMIC MEETING TO DO, BUT SOMETHING SUCH AS SENSITIVE AS THIS SHOULD NOT RPT NOT BE ONE OF THEM.
EILTS

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED MOSCOW.

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Message Attributes

Automatic DecapTIONing: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, AGREEMENTS, NEGOTIATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 OCT 1974
DecapTION Date: 28 MAY 2004
DecapTION Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: shawdg
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974CAIRO08434
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740304-0071
From: CAIRO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741021/aaaaargk.tel
Line Count: 83
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EB
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: STADIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: STADIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: shawdg
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 12 JUN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <12 JUN 2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <11 MAR 2003 by shawdg>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: JOINT ECONOMIC WORKING GROUP: FCN TREATY
TAGS: EGEN, EG, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005